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ABSTRACT

This document details the goals and characteristics of the faculty Mentor Program at Cabrillo Community College (California). The program is designed to facilitate the orientation and adaptation of new faculty members to the role of community college instructor. Experienced faculty members act as mentors to new tenure-track faculty. Mentors are full-time instructors and are usually from the same department or division as the mentees. The mentors and mentees are teamed in a non-supervisory, non-evaluative relationship. Mentor guidelines include suggestions for the planning meeting, which should reflect considerations regarding contracts, grade reports, faculty evaluations, instructor absence procedures, payroll procedures, and other issues. The document also details guidelines for optional class visits to the mentee's classroom and visits by the mentee to the mentor's classroom. The guidelines encourage the mentor not to make comments about the mentee's class unless asked to do so, and to approach necessary criticism indirectly and in a non-threatening manner. The document includes a checklist of questions the mentor should ask herself/himself regarding the observation of the instructor. Guidelines also offer suggestions for the mentee's visit to the mentor's classroom. The paper recommends periodic contact throughout the semester and includes a list of things to discuss with mentees. (Author/NB)

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Cabrillo College

MENTOR HANDBOOK

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MENTOR GUIDELINES

The Planning Meeting

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I. Program Goals and Characteristics

In this program, mentoring is considered to be a long range professional development strategy, so that all activities are directed toward fostering professional growth from the time a faculty member enters the college through contract renewal and tenure. The first year mentoring activities encourage the tenure-track faculty to understand the academic and learning activities, to develop networks of colleagues to facilitate professional work, and to learn the particular social and political dynamics of the college. Experienced faculty have been asked to serve as mentors on the assumption that they can more effectively facilitate the networking of new faculty, provide role models for successful professional development, and convey the lessons of the "survivors" experience.

The program has three areas of emphasis:
1) **Entry level survival needs in the institution**. Mentors can provide institutional information on services, benefits budgets for teaching or research; act as advocates for the newcomers, and help them to integrate into the scholarly community of the institution.

2) **Professional development and advancement needs**. Early in the first year, mentors must make a special point of advising mentees of the importance of understanding review criteria and the evaluation process.

3) **Socio-psychological needs**. Mentors can serve as guides and models in helping to develop the skills needed to cope with less than congenial relationships, as well as in suggesting ways to influence the climate of the department so that new faculty are included and become respected as colleagues.

II. Program Overview

The Mentor Program is designed to facilitate the orientation and adaptation of new faculty members to the role of community college instructors. The program is characterized by an experienced faculty member acting as a mentor to the new tenure-track instructor. Other faculty may also be assigned to work with the new instructor, such as when an instructor is teaching a course for the first time or if an instructor needs additional assistance in the delivery of instruction. Faculty mentors are full-time instructors and are usually from the same department or division as the mentees.

As you are aware, the problem this program addresses is a significant one. For most new tenure-track faculty the burden of having a full load of classes to teach, learning the college policies and procedures, and becoming a participating member of the Cabrillo community can be a formidable challenge. Even for those who were previously adjunct faculty at Cabrillo, many had limited contact with the college and focused only on the students in their classes.

The Mentor Program facilitates the orientation and adaptation of new faculty members to Cabrillo College by teaming them with experienced faculty members in a non-supervisory, non-evaluative relationship. In some cases, besides being a mentor, you may serve on the evaluation team for your mentee. As teaching professionals with responsibilities that include making professional and sometimes difficult evaluations and decisions, the faculty mentor is expected to keep personality and favoritism out of the evaluation process. Therefore, mentors are not excused from serving on evaluation teams and are expected to make fair and professional assessments of their peers (including mentees). The intent of the mentoring relationship is, should, and remain non-supervisory, nurturing, and very positive.

III. Mentor Guidelines

Your are the key ingredient for the success of the program. Your role as a faculty mentor is Very Important. If at any time you have problems, questions, or need assistance, please contact your Division Chairperson, or Vice President of Instruction.

This handbook provides some suggestions for your new role as faculty mentor. Take time to read the handbook carefully so that you can incorporate some of the suggestions into your mentorship. In addition, administrative guidelines and procedures for the program are included. GOOD LUCK TO YOU IN YOUR NEW ROLE.

The Planning Meeting

The planning meeting may be the first contact you have with the instructor. First impressions tend to be lasting; as a result, the planning meeting should be carefully organized. Your primary objective will be to establish mutual agreement on the objectives of the program and work plan for accomplishing them. A "Faculty Support Agreement" is attached to facilitate your planning. The objectives that you establish should reflect the following considerations:

A. The faculty member should have a chance to become familiar with the administrative requirements of his/her job at Cabrillo College, including:
   - CCFT
   - Contracts
   - Roll Sheets and Final Grade Reports
   - Faculty Evaluations
   - Instructor absence procedures
   - Use of guest lecturers, field trips, etc.
   - Payroll procedures
   - Use of course outline
   - Student withdrawals

B. If a standardized course outline and/or syllabus is provided, an explanation should be given concerning its use and the degree of flexibility the instructor has in varying from it or in modifying it.

C. The mentor should familiarize the faculty member with instructional resources such as the Library, T.L.C. Learner Outcomes Project, Student Services, etc.

D. A positive example of the teaching role should be modeled for the new instructor.

E. The faculty member should also become familiar with the grading and evaluation system used by the department, or one that has been successfully used in a similar class. Either the mentor's system or that of another faculty member could be provided to him/her for discussion.

In addition to setting objectives, your support agreement should include a schedule or calendar for additional meetings, reciprocal class visits (if any), phone conferences, and any other mutually agreeable program elements.

Each mentor/mentee relationship will be different and should be structured to meet the needs of the individuals involved. A specific work plan for the program, however, should be the outcome of the planning meeting. Some suggested program elements of this plan may include:

- Visits by the mentor to the instructor's classes
- Visits by the mentee to the mentor's classes
- Periodic telephone conferences
- Other personal conferences
- Visits or tours of college instructional support facilities
- Scheduled meetings with other faculty, administrators or staff

The role of the mentor is very important to the new faculty member's success and to the quality of instruction provided to Cabrillo College students. Dedicate as much time to your mentorship as possible. For example, making one telephone call or leaving a note in the mentee's box during the semester does not constitute a substantive mentorship. While there are no specific guidelines for the frequency of interaction you should have with your mentees, please be reminded that you are expected to have more than cursory contact.

Class Visits (Optional)

Visiting The Mentee's Class

If mutually agreed upon, classroom visitations can be extremely valuable when approached in the right manner. For the record, the role of mentor is neither evaluative nor supervisory, nor should you volunteer a critique unless it is specifically requested. The primary purpose of the classroom visit is to maintain communication and to provide the opportunity for non-directive dialogue about the teaching process. The follow-up discussion should focus upon such things as, problems in following the course syllabus, answering questions, discussion of the subject matter, strategies for teaching future topics, etc.

Two things should be emphasized:

1) Be low-key and non-directive in discussions
2) Be positive (no mutual gripe sessions!)

Be A Good Observer

If you are asked (or if it seems appropriate) to make comments about the class you observed, be sure the first thing you say is positive and that, overall, the sum of the things you say is positive. If there is some criticism you feel needs to be pointed out, approach

it indirectly to see if the instructor is already aware of it. If not, by all means mention it. But do so in a non-threatening manner. As a mentor, your role is to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

While your role is not to provide a critique of the instructor's teaching performance, you cannot participate effectively in discussion or respond to questions unless you carefully observe the teaching behavior. Like most things, success as an observer will depend largely upon the amount and quality of your planning and preparation. The result should be a mental checklist that you go through as you are observing the instructor. Some things you might consider placing on the checklist may include:

- What are the objectives?
- What did the instructor do? Lecture? Ask questions? Monitor laboratory work?
- Observe small group discussions?
- What did the students do? Answer questions? Listen? Laboratory work? Group
- Discussion? Read? Take tests? Do assignments?
- What is the degree of correlation between the above three things?
- Where did this session fit into the syllabus?
- What instructional materials and methods were used?
- How was the class managed?

There are other things you may wish to include as well. For a moment, let's turn to the question of what do you do with what you have observed. Your first inclination will be to offer a critique. Don't do it. Start the discussion of the session indirectly. Talk about the content that was covered, the instructor's impressions of the class, the syllabus, or anything related to the course. Don't offer your opinions unless they are asked for. Your role is more appropriately that of a counselor asking questions, drawing out the instructor's impression of what occurred, and elaborating on what you think is important.

Why so much soft-soap? You will never be accepted as a friend and a confidant if you assume an authoritarian role. Your principle concern is to help and you can't do that if you are perceived as a threat. Once you establish an atmosphere of mutual trust, it may become possible for you to be more direct with your comments. Until that happens, low-key is the word.

Inviting The Mentee To Your Class

Being chosen to serve as a mentor is indicative of the institution's recognition of your abilities, as well as recognizing your personal ideals regarding professional competence. We hope you will extend an invitation to the mentee to observe your classes. On such occasions, take care to practice what you preach, because the real message that will be communicated will be dictated by your actions, not your words.

If mentees do visit your class, you may want to suggest that they also develop a mental checklist of things to look for during the session. Their checklist would probably look something like the one you used in your visit. In the follow-up session, you may want to

ask questions which lead to a natural and meaningful discussion of the class session. Because it was your class, and since you are not easily threatened, the discussion may take the form of a critical analysis of what occurred; however, don't let it get out of hand or allow yourself to become defensive.

As a part of the observation, plan to have a follow-up meeting with your mentee. Again, try to be low-key and non-directive. Answer any questions as openly as you can. Try to expand the discussion to encompass your strategy for teaching the entire course. If appropriate, go over your syllabus with the mentee, discuss your grading system, explain how you handle administrative chores, and try to demonstrate the clear relationship between your objectives and your teaching methods and techniques. Of course, as we are all aware, no one can perform miracles in the classroom, so be open about your shortcomings and explain what you are doing about them.

As professional teachers, we know that people learn in many ways. Observation of your class may provide a valuable addition to the learning experience of the new instructor. Open and meaningful dialogue is also a useful way of learning, and in this situation may be especially important. If you are just not comfortable with having the mentee visit your class, or if for some reason it is inappropriate, then don't invite him/her. Instead, you may be able to arrange for him/her to observe someone else; e.g. (someone who is teaching the same course as the instructor).

The literature suggests that many mentees feel the classroom visits are the most beneficial aspect of mentor programs. Without classroom visits, your discussions with the mentee may be somewhat theoretical. With them, you can talk specifically about materials, techniques, and events. They are, however, the most sensitive part of the program. If done improperly, they can cause more harm than good.

Other Contacts

In addition to the initial planning meeting and possible exchange of classroom visits, you may wish to make regular periodic contact with the new instructor during the semester. These contacts can be by telephone, personal conferences, or even written messages. The important thing is to make yourself available.

You should encourage the mentee to initiate contacts as needs arise by providing your office hours, home number, and class schedule.

There is no intent to insist on a lot of bureaucratic requirements or restrictions in the Mentoring Program. Please consider these ideas as suggestions. The purpose of the program is to provide communication channels to facilitate the orientation of new faculty to Cabrillo College and to community college concepts. Any strategy that accomplishes this is the one you want to use.

Things To Discuss With The New Faculty Member

Below is a list of topics, procedures and requirements you should be sure new instructors understand as a part of their orientation to Cabrillo College.

A. The community college philosophy, with emphasis on the "open door" concept
B. How community college students differ from students in four-year institutions
C. Working with academically disadvantaged students and disabled students
D. Things listed under "The Planning Meeting" on page 6
E. The importance of meeting administrative deadlines, and the impact on student's grades, and financial aid awards
F. Cabrillo College organizational structure
G. Sources of information.
   - College Catalog
   - Course Schedule
   - Curriculum Manual

H. Staff development at Cabrillo College
   - Flex Week Workshops
   - Mentoring Program
   - Faculty Orientation Program
   - Teaching Learning Center

Things NOT to Discuss With The New Faculty Member

It may seem presumptuous to provide a list of this type to experienced, competent college faculty members. To prevent the one case in a thousand occurring, however, here is a list of things **not** to cover with the new instructor:

- Opinions about the personalities of students, faculty and staff
- Your beliefs about how to teach (Instead, provide suggestions of things to do)
- Your personal history, problems, animosities, successes, failures, etc.(unless they are constructive contributions to the Mentoring Program)

The most important goal of the new faculty mentor is to contribute to the successful orientation of new faculty. This program has tremendous potential for positive benefit to Cabrillo College. Thank you for your support and remember that mentor/mentee communications are confidential.

HELPFUL HINTS

Early contact initiated by mentor

Useful, practical information

Help in understanding the organizational structure

Discussion of teaching methodologies

Mentors who want to be mentors

Information about college resources

Schedules and locations that coincide with the mentor's to make contact easy and convenient

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MENTORING ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

Week 1-2: Initial Orientation. Prior to the beginning of the semester or during the first two weeks:

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Date completed

_____ 1. Contact new faculty member and set time for the first meeting.

_____ 2. At first meeting, complete written agreement and exchange teaching schedules, office locations and telephone numbers.

_____ 3. Discuss departmental policies (as applicable):

-payroll	-absence	-withdrawals	-travel forms
-mailroom	-media equip.	-incompletes	-funding sources
-Xeroxing	-overloads	-student prerequ.	-maintenance work request forms
-grades	-field trips	-office keys	-voice mail
-parking	-other	-TLC	-email

_____ 4. Mention resources available (visit facilities, if possible):

-learning centers	-schedule of courses	-Staff Development
-library	-Learning Resource Center	-DSPS
-catalog	-Student Services	-EOPS
-TLC	-New Faculty Orientation	

_____ 5. Discuss new faculty member's course(s):

-syllabus -articulation -text(s) -grading

Weeks 3-8: In addition to activities decided upon in written agreement, consider the following:

_____ 1. Invite the new faculty member to visit your class(s)

_____ 2. Visit the new faculty member's class(es) if requested (or suggest the new faculty member has a class videotaped).

_____ 3. Keep new faculty member informed of department/discipline meetings and relevant campus activities.

_____ 4. Discuss peer observation visits, including the purpose, forms and procedures.

_____ 5. Discuss student evaluations, including the purpose, forms and procedures.

Weeks 9-16: In addition to activities decided upon in written agreement, consider the following:

_____ 1. Discuss procedures for turning in final grades.

_____ 2. Review the semester's activities

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MENTORING PROGRAM FACULTY AGREEMENT

I. NEW FACULTY MEMBER'S GOALS: Choose and list a number of specific aspects of professional development that can be addressed this semester.

II. STRATEGIES TO MEET GOALS: Describe the activities, meetings, networking, etc. chosen to take action on needs. Link to other staff development activities where appropriate.

III. TIME COMMITMENT: Agree upon the amount of time to be devoted to this relationship. **Minimum is one hour a month**

NOTE: Conversations between resource faculty and new faculty members are to be considered confidential. The relationship is established to assist new faculty members in their professional development but does not guarantee contract renewal or a successful tenure application.

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